

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

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his mother so should he treat his *mama*. A man's father and his father's brothers are less important than his *mama* who receive the largest share of all game killed by their actual or potential sons-in-law. 606

The love and comradeship existing between father-in-law and son-in-law was often very marked, and sometimes the voice of Handuna of Sitala Wanniya took on a special tone of tenderness when speaking of his *baena*; indeed, the importance of the relationship existing between father-in-law and son-in-law is shown in many ways. Thus not only do they very generally hunt and move about together, but whereas when a girl marries she is often given pots and gourds by her mother, a man receives wedding gifts, which—as is shown in the chapter on land transfer—often consist of tracts of land, not from his father but from his father-in-law, who should be his mother's brother.

Again, although a man presents part of his kill to his father's brothers and mother's sisters, a larger share is given to his actual or potential father-in-law and mother-in-law, and before marriage these may get a specially large share. A man would assist his potential father-in-law and mother-in-law in house building and chena cultivation as a matter of course, but he would only help his other uncles and aunts if asked. When hunting, a son-in-law will usually carry his father-in-law's kill, but he would show the same consideration for his own father and probably for any older man. [482]

We may perhaps fairly sum up this matter by saying, that whereas before marriage a man paid at least as much regard to his future father-in-law as to his own father (and in theory he should pay more), after marriage his father-in-law becomes more important, and the association between father-in-law and son-in-law becomes far closer and more intimate than that existing between father and son. There are, however, certain matters in which father and son are more closely associated than *mama* and *baena*: (a boy's bringing up is essentially a matter to which his father attends, and in which the *mama* takes no great part unless the father dies.) (Again, in theory, sons should take at least as large a part in looking after their aged and infirm fathers as do the latter's sons-in-law.) 593 606

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Fig. 1. Bambura Yaka ceremony, the bow of Dunne Yakini
(Sitala Wanniya)*

• [482]



Fig. 2. Bambura Yaka ceremony, Kaira dances with the tadiya
(Sitala Wanniya)*

[facing p. 242 c]

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Fig. 1. Coast Veddas.

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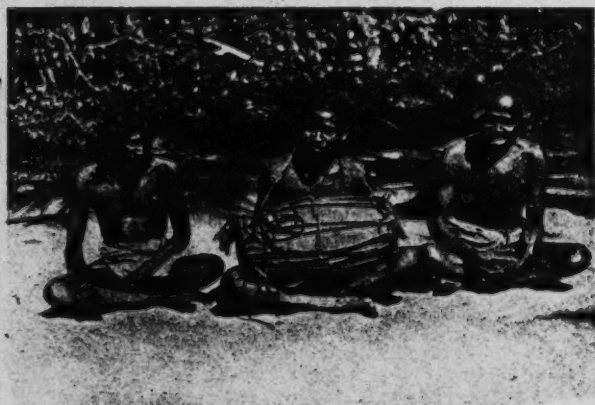


Fig. 2. Coast Veddas of Vakarai

[facing p. 332 a]



Handuna strings his bow (Page 16)



The best of the Hennebeddh Veddas.—Poromola and Handuna (Page 16)

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Handuna's household. (Page 19)

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Hemsebedde Veddas (Page 16)



The iguana hunter. (Page 17)

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"Sedate, wistful children" (Page 36)

[Facing p. 36]

114 Even a Vedda child should be able to pick its way through the jungle
487 with no mark to guide it."

361 We had travelled thus a long while, and for all I knew had lost all
342 trace of the Veddas, when we struck a stream where the foot-prints of
114 a man and a dog were evident. Soon we were climbing up to Dhik-galge,
to find, alas! that not only was it deserted, but that no Veddas had been
near it for many a long day. The Veddas had lied to the Chetty!

The cave we found ourselves in was a magnificent one—long, spacious
and open to the sky, with tall straight trees towering before it. Below,
a stream babbled over rocks, making delightful bathing pools. Around,
was the tenderest music of birds. It was a romantic spot, specially
designed, as it were, by Nature for the jungle-dweller. The dome of the
cave was covered with crude drawings. A broken pot had been put
in a niche. There were fragments of filthy rag, a large cooking
frame and dry leaves which had long previously been slept upon. The
rocky floor was smooth in places where *kurrukhan* had been rubbed to
flour with flat worn stones, and cupped where maize had been pounded.
The *aratchi* of Paragahakelle had spoken true. A handful of moss,
peeping from a crevice, revealed, when disturbed, a couple of fledglings.
Our first thought was that they were young swiftlets, left there to die
by ruthless nest-hunters; but they flew too strongly for that; and soon,
the piteous cries of the parent birds told us that we had inadvertently
rified a fly-catcher's nest.

114 It was mid-day, and, being very tired, we sat down to a meal; I to
camp-pie and chocolate, the others to raw cassava. Our hunger abated,
I reminded our guides that my offer of a reward still stood, and that he
would get it, who brought me up with even one of those Veddas wherever
he might be. Asking us to stay where we were, Meenemaruwa and the
half-Vedda of Galmede vanished into the jungle.

The better part of an hour must have elapsed when we heard the latter
calling to us excitedly. He said that Meenemaruwa was in hot pursuit
of the Veddas who, to judge by their traces, were making away at great
speed, evidently scared by the sight of my shoe-prints.

222 Following at a run, we eventually came upon them—a wild, swarthy
224 group of two men and two boys, freighted with the spoils of the chase;
each with his sackful of edible bird's nests, dried sambur meat and
482 *bambara* honey; the leaders with two old muzzle-loaders. May the
142 picture not fade. Suthubanda was there, and the youth Badapissa as
609 our sleuths had told us. But the figure that arrested my fancy most
was a wild, fiery-eyed, shaggy-haired fellow of twenty-five—an ebon
Apollo. Gama he was called because he was born on a journey (*gamana*).
To his waist was attached the inflated bladder of the sambur they had
killed. Nor did his looks belie his character, for, even as we came up,
[578] he flared into foul-mouthed fury at a tired, inoffensive boy of their
company.

They were delighted with the tobacco and betel we shared out to them,
and gave us honey in return. Money they refused. When we asked
them how it was that they had not been in Dhik-galge as they had said
they were, their only answer was a hearty laugh!

600 It was hail and farewell! for the hour was past noon, and the Veddas
had many miles to make before nightfall; so had we. But those shadows
of the spangled forest were soon to call me again.

224 descend; while two or three others, with perhaps a dog, beat the jungle above and start the animal, which is shot almost at the point of the guns.

267 There is no flesh the Vedda loves more than that of the wanderoo (grey langur). He will sometimes be seen to halt by a tree, and strike 224 its trunk three resounding blows with his axe-head. This is to discover the whereabouts of the wanderoo. On hearing the sound, these animals, imagining it to be that of a falling tree or rock, give vent to the "a-he-hik" so characteristic of them when startled.

252 One afternoon Suthu Banda brought in a great langur along on his (482) shoulder, with its tail rove through its slit cheek. Within twenty-five minutes not a morsel of the animal remained. Disjointing the tail at the root, he dissected up a strip of dorsal skin in continuation of it as far as the neck; twisting this over a branch, he suspended and rapidly skinned the quarry. The meat was cut up in pieces and placed on large logs over a fire, the flames licking them all round. Bony segments, such as the spine, ribs and limbs, were pounded on a stone when half burnt, and then replaced on embers. The stomach and entrails were slit open and their contents merely scooped away with the fingers, and roasted. No water whatever was used! It was a truly sickening sight to see the relish with which the intestines with adherent faecal matter 262 were greedily eaten. When we remarked on the repulsiveness of it, the gluttonous epicure calmly remarked, "Yes, the filth gets eaten right enough. What of it? It is good medicine. If you get a wanderoo what haven't you got? No marriage is like it." How true is the saying that the pig and the Vedda are one!

226 Fish* abound in the forest streams, all bony and very indifferent 824 to the taste. The Veddass catch these, not with rods or nets, but with poisons. The fruit, bark or root of certain trees† is smashed up and thrown into pools or banked waterways. The water is then stirred; as it gets stained the fish become restless, and leap on to the bank, or turn belly upwards stupefied. They are collected and boiled with a little salt and a few chillies and eaten at once, or dried over a trestle (251) like meat. 252

Q22 Let us see what sort of fare the jungle trees provide. Of fruit there is plenty in season:—*Mora*, *kong*, *galacembela*, *veera*, *palu*, *damba*, *jak*, *guavas*, *ulkantha*, *kibutoo*, *bubanga*, *kothalanga*, *leyaneyya*, *karamba*, *madu* never eaten raw because it causes giddiness and vomiting!). The cabbages of palms such as *intibada* and *kitulalla*. Yams:—*Gonala*, *katnala*, *hirathala*, *alalla*, in order of preference. Then there are the various barks they chew incessantly to stay the hunger of their long fasts:—*Demata*, *bolvilla* and *thambola*, all substitutes for betel; and *davata* for arecanut; and besides these the barks of *opulu*, *galacembela*, *mora*, *kabatha*, *nuga*, *halawa*, *galkara*, and in fact anything, however, insipid, provided it is not poisonous.

757 Their medicines are few. There is *gonkuttudalu* which they crush up 752 with water and apply to the head for headaches; *meclalla-pothu* which they smash up with *chunam* and use as a dressing for wounds; but for abrasions of the foot they will as soon rub in a little sand with

* *Walapotho*, *angulao*, *lulo*, *kalukanao*, *kanupatho*, *anho* (reih), *magaro*, *kungo*, *Arbeliyo*, *peky*, *walibando*, *setaku*, *badapathalo*, *walithaiyo*, *pintuwaiyo*, *kowaiyo*, *galpandurao*.

† *Kukurumang-geddr*, *kala-mul*, *thimiri-geddr*, *dhamba-pothu*, *pustal-mul*.

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An ape for dinner. (Page 82)

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Ala-gaigo, a Vedda cave. (Page 84)

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The Sant Vedda we saw in Bichchima. (Page 95)

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